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ABSTRACT

2 A cushion that includes a cushioning element. The cushioning
3 element has a number of substantially parallel elongate columns
4 formed in a gelatinous cushioning media. The columns are
5 configured so that when a force is applied to the cushioning
6 element in a direction that is generally parallel to the
7 longitudinal axes of the columns, the cushioning element will
8 yield by a combination of compressability of the cushioning media
9 and bucklability of the walls of the columns. In particular, the
10 walls of columns which are located beneath a protruberance on an
11 object being cushioned tend to buckle, permitting the cushioning
12 element to conform to the shape of the cushioned object while
13 evenly distributing a supporting force across the contact area of
14 the cushioned object and avoiding pressure peaks. The preferred
15 cushioning media is a gelatinous elastomer or gelatinous
16 viscoelastomer. Various configurations of cushioning elements,
17 including sidewall supports, are disclosed.